

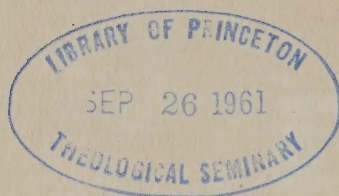
how to WORK WITH TEEN-AGE GROUPS

by DOROTHY M. ROBERTS



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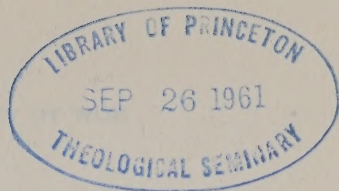


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how to work with teen-age groups

how to

Association Press, New York



WORK WITH TEEN-AGE GROUPS

by DOROTHY M. ROBERTS

HOW TO WORK WITH TEEN-AGE GROUPS

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Young Men's Christian Associations*

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contents

Introduction	vii
chapter 1	
Understanding Today's Teen-Agers	11
Similarities of teen-agers through the centuries . . . Where today's teen-agers differ . . . Basic needs of adolescents . . . Interests and questions of today's youth	
chapter 2	
What Youth Hopes For in an Adult Leader	27
What two teen-age generations asked of an adult leader . . . An adult interpretation of youth's requirements	
chapter 3	
The Process of Program Building	39
How working with the group's organization helps . . . How the activities program develops . . . A program illustration . . . Some general principles of program planning	
chapter 4	
Two Concrete Aids to Program Building	52
How to set up a club file . . . How to enrich program by a check list	
The Last Word	61

introduction

The adult who volunteers to work with a teen-age group has at least one natural asset of prime importance. This is that he likes teen-agers and has some faith in their potentialities or he would not volunteer in the first place. It is not difficult for such an adult to *see these young people as persons rather than as problems* even though he knows that they have problems.

Teen-agers instinctively know when an adult likes them and accepts them as people. They, in turn, are inclined to accept the adult on the same terms even though they may not show this inclination immediately. Given this basis for the possible development of mutual respect and confidence, the volunteer adult is in a good position to learn how to establish this desirable relationship firmly and to learn whatever else ought to be learned to make his work with the group valuable to the members.

If the adult volunteer is to make the most of his

opportunity to be helpful it is to his advantage to have: (1) an understanding of the main characteristics of adolescence, and a reasonably clear picture of today's teen-ager and of his basic needs; (2) a grasp of present-day teen-age interests and some of the recurring questions relating to them; (3) an understanding of what constitutes a helpful adult working relationship to the group; (4) an understanding of the importance of recognizing and developing the youth leadership within the group; (5) an understanding of the importance of program planning *with the group* rather than *for the group*; (6) a familiarity with the kinds of resource materials that are helpful and with the various methods which can be used to help the group develop interesting and satisfying programs.

The purpose of this book is to offer to adult volunteers as much help in these six areas as possible and in as down-to-earth, practical terms as is possible within a limited format.

Working with a teen-age group is fun, but it also requires much time and energy, much patience and understanding, steadfast adult integrity and spiritual poise. We do not always see tangible results, and it is easy to feel discouraged from time to time. Never-

theless, there is great satisfaction in knowing that we are trying to help to the best of our ability. The effort has a value all its own. It somehow gradually strengthens our faith that the adolescents' innate urge to grow makes them ready to utilize every bit of nourishment we can offer to those young people who look to us for guidance when we volunteer to work with their teen-age group.

DOROTHY M. ROBERTS

1

understanding today's teen-agers

The leader of a teen-age group will get his best results only if he tries to understand the special characteristics of adolescence: how today's teen-agers resemble all those of previous generations, where they differ from them, the basic needs of adolescents, and therefore their interests.

similarities of teen-agers through the centuries

The teen-ager in every generation is a powerhouse of energy and a bundle of contradictions. He can be gay one day—and sad the next. He can be sensible by the most rigid of adult standards—and he can be so frivolous that an adult wonders if he ever has a serious thought in his head. He sometimes startles his elders by an occasional and sudden clear insight—and he can be as unreasoning and childish as an eight-year-old. He is often resentful of adult inconsistencies, but he is usually unaware of his own.

He wants to be free from adult restraints, but at the same time he wants to know for sure that there is a loving adult around to help him make a decision if the going gets too rough. He is quite convinced that adults do not understand him, and yet he wants to be understood. He does not want to be understood in any obviously psychological ways, but rather he seeks some evidence from adults and from his

peers that he is accepted *as a person*, just as he is.

His assurance of continuing acceptance is usually an easier feeling for him to achieve among his peers than among adults. This is because all teen-agers have relatively the same kinds of problems and interests. They seek and usually find both understanding and a large measure of security within their own age group, whether it is a natural group of friends or an adult sponsored organized group. The adolescent's feeling about a sure acceptance from adults is uncertain mainly because he does not realize that an adult, genuinely desiring to give him a sense of security, must keep on the jump in order to readjust his own accepting attitude to the daily shifting back and forth of the young person's ideas, moods, and behavior.

Today's average teen-ager is no more sure of who he is or what he may become than his grandparents were at his age. In many ways he is even less certain of what he may become, because the choices for his future are so much more diverse.

Adolescence has always been and probably always will be a paradox. Its most outstanding characteristic is this almost day-to-day fluctuation in thoughts, moods, and behavior. This is a symptom of the battle going on within the individual—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—between the subconscious desire for the childhood to which he cannot return and the more or less conscious longing to be the adult he has not yet become.

where today's teen-agers differ

There seems to be no change in the fundamental nature of adolescence, but there are drastic changes

in the environment which have an effect on today's teen-ager and make him different from previous generations in some respects. Two of these changes have particular significance for our discussion because they have a direct bearing on both the actual and the potential relationship between adults and youth.

The first environmental change is that there is now no area of information available to adults that is not equally and easily available to youth. The perfection of airplanes, radio, cinema photography, television, the increase in the numbers of newspapers and magazines of all descriptions make this so. Along with the unlimited access to information, youth is also exposed to a wider range—far wider than were teen-agers of past generations—of diverse adult views on religious, social, moral, ethical, economic, technological, and political problems. For example, such questions as the adult controversies over the quality of American education, youthful delinquency, and the segregation issue reach the teen-ager directly through movies, radio, television, newspaper and magazine discussion, and frequently through personal experience.

For teen-agers to have this wide range of information and to be aware of adult differences of opinion about problems is good in itself. The difficulty is that no generation of teen-agers has had less definite guidance to help them know what, of all this abundance of information, is true and what is false. The adult atmosphere of confusion, uncertainty, and a large measure of fear robs today's adolescents of the normal degree of security that they have a right to expect from the adult world. Youth today knows as well as adults that the future of the world is far from certain

in these times. The teen-age group as a whole seems to have lost confidence in the wisdom which adults are supposed to have. Youth does not yet understand that in our free society wise decisions can be reached only after all points of view have been heard. The young person only sees and feels the adult confusion which apparently matches or exceeds his own.

The free world struggle today has much in common with the basic inner struggle of the adolescent to understand himself and to find an individual direction for his life. Recognition of this similarity could be a basis for adult-youth understanding of each other, but it is not yet so recognized by either age group.

The first difference then is that the present-day adolescent group as a whole is as well informed as, or better informed than, the average adult; but because neither they nor the adults around them know for sure what the information means, the confusion natural to adolescence is compounded both for the individual and for the teen-age group as a whole.

The second environmental change which makes today's teen-agers different from earlier generations, and which is related to the question of how to work with groups of them, is that proportionately more boys and girls than ever before have at least some high school education.

In school they become accustomed to thinking and speaking on their feet. They gain experience in orderly parliamentary procedure by which they become aware that through this democratic process not only can the minority be heard but also it is their right to be heard. For the most part history is taught in relation to the development of ideas and govern-

ments over broad periods of time rather than as a conglomerate mass of dates to be memorized. Social studies courses make them aware of the social problems of our day. Many schools seek to make theories come alive by providing opportunity for student service to the school and community. Increasing numbers of high schools have one or more foreign exchange students, whose presence helps the others to find out that youth throughout the world have much in common. Extracurricular activities of various kinds, including sports, give them experience in co-operative teamwork.

Adolescents have acquired a full range of adult terminology partly through their school experience and partly because of their out-of-school exposure to the mass-communication range of information and adult controversies. It is true that teen-agers have a private, protective language of their own, equivalent to their grandparents' "pig latin," for use among themselves. Otherwise, the words they use are adult words.

The net result of these two environmental changes is that today's average teen-ager has caught up to the average adult with respect to general information and their ability to be articulate in the adults' own terminology. The significance of this for the adult volunteer is that while adult superiority has been cut down in these respects, a new basis for communication between youth and adults has come into being. Today's youth cannot be looked upon as innocent children. They must be regarded as an informed group, on the whole, and also experienced, in many respects, to a degree that was not true of earlier generations.

basic needs of adolescents

The adult who volunteers to work with a youth group is in an advantageous position to share with the members his wider experience and to establish a relationship with them based upon mutual confidence and respect. He is at hand, available to try to answer youth's questions or to translate into specific terms their groping search for the meaning and purpose of some experience. Some teen-agers may be mature enough to state that they are looking for a "philosophy of life." Others will be asking, "Who am I, anyhow?" "Why am I here?" "What kind of grownup do I want to be?" "What am I capable of becoming?" All this questing for life's real meaning is the central concern of the adolescent, whether he is conscious of it or not.

But before any specific opportunity for the adult leader to help the group with this concern can crystallize, it is usually necessary for him to see that members of his group first have the chance to satisfy other basic needs. Let's take a quick look at what psychologists and educators say are these needs. No matter what words these students of adolescence use they are all agreed that there are at least the following ten, reduced to the simplest terms and not listed in any order of importance:

TEN BASIC NEEDS

- To establish satisfactory relationships with age mates of both sexes
- To establish satisfying and meaningful relationships to adults
- To learn how to use leisure time well

- To find out how to determine ethical values and what constitutes desirable behavior
- To establish independence from the family
- To learn how to develop respect for other persons
- To learn how to live and work with others co-operatively
- To find out what skills, understandings, and attitudes are needed to earn a living
- To understand the significance of the family and the conditions conducive to a happy family life
- To understand what are the rights and corresponding duties of a citizen in a democratic society.¹

New York University recently released a report of a study of youth groups made by The Center for Human Relations. This study was of so-called "natural groups"; that is, groups which come into being because of friendship and common interests, unsponsored by any youth-serving agency and having no adult related to them. The purposes of this study were (1) "to explore what it takes to encourage self-governing youth groups to form and operate and (2) to help such groups find satisfying and significant relationships with their communities."²

This study reached the conclusion that there were three youth concerns of special significance to the purposes of the study:

- Every youth needs to feel that there is a significant place for him in his immediate social world as an adolescent.

¹ Adapted from *Hi-Y Today* (New York: Association Press, 1956), pp. 115-116.

² "Youth as Citizens," Human Relations Monograph 7, p. 41; The Center for Human Relations Studies, New York University, Washington Square, New York, N. Y., 1956.

- Every youth needs to be able to exercise his intelligence and growing maturity in solving problems of real concern to him and to the adult world.
- Every adolescent needs to be given the opportunity to learn that his own life situation is not the only one there is.³

Of these three needs the second seems to have a direct bearing on the two environmental changes we discussed that have resulted among youth in a new awareness of the problems of the adult world and the ability to talk about them in adult terms. Youth has always wanted to be given his head in meeting his own problems, but to be interested in having a hand in solving the problems of the adult world is new and unique in this generation of teen-agers. This new trend is a basis for realistic adult confidence in the contribution youth may be able to make to adult society both now and later. It is also a challenge to adults to create opportunities for youth to put their minds to work in relation to problems of the adult world and to participate co-operatively with adults in the solution of those problems which seem important to them, in whatever ways they themselves feel able.

The Psychology of Adolescence,⁴ by Dr. Arthur J. Jersild, is a readable, enlightening, and helpful book for the youth group leader and for any other adult because it helps him not only to understand teen-agers in a very human way but, indirectly, to understand himself better. Dr. Jersild maintains that the central problem of every person is to be accepted by

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957.

others. For teen-agers it is an acute one. The author is careful to point out that to be accepted is not the same as being liked. A person who is accepted by others is respected at all times but may not be liked at one time or another and, under certain circumstances, may not be liked by a whole group of people.

The thesis of Dr. Jersild's book is that the degree to which a person is accepted (respected) by others tends to be in direct proportion to the degree in which the person accepts (respects) himself. For the teen-ager to accept himself in this sense it is of the utmost importance that he face up to his *real assets and real liabilities* in relation to his physical, mental, social, emotional, and spiritual qualities. Adults can be of concrete value to young people by encouraging and helping them first to appraise themselves accurately and then to accept what they find out. It should be noted that to learn how to respect others is one of the basic youth needs listed. Dr. Jersild also maintains that for adolescents the process of learning to be self-accepting is accompanied by the need to discover what life is about. He also maintains that young people are more capable of thinking in abstract terms than most adults give them credit for.

These ideas are worth thinking about in working with a teen-age group. Any adult can check their validity both by comparing them with his own adult experience and by remembering, as accurately as possible, the small and big worries he himself had as a teen-ager. On the other hand, it is essential that in recalling one's youth, neither the solutions nor the manner in which they came about should be equated with the solutions required by today's youth. The en-

vironment, both specific and general, is never the same for two different generations.

Today's teen-ager must be helped to meet his own requirements in today's setting and in the light of the realities both of his immediate teen-age environment and of the adult world in which he is trying to grow up.

Teen-agers need fun, too. Though "fun" has not appeared as an item by itself in the listings given above, it is related indirectly to at least three of the ten "basic needs": "to establish satisfactory relationships with age mates of both sexes"; "to learn how to use leisure time well"; and "to learn how to live and work with others co-operatively."

Teen-agers have their serious side, which is more serious than many adults realize, but they have their fun side, too. They need fun and sometimes they appear to want it first, last, and always. Sometimes the inexperience of adolescents—or perhaps sheer boredom—leads them to an unwise estimate of what fun is.

It is helpful for an adviser to be aware of the wide range of healthful, constructive, recreational activities that appeal to this age group. Dancing is probably the number one interest. In spite of the noise of "Rock and Roll," it is no worse than the "Charleston," "Jitterbug" days of their grandmothers. Other interests include hobby groups of all kinds—putting on plays, craft work, listening to records (not all dance records either), art, decorating their meeting place, hot rod activities, science hobbies, to mention only a few. On the sports side most boys and girls like swimming, ice skating and roller skating. Many girls as well as boys enjoy bowling, basketball, tennis,

volleyball, and badminton. Most boys like football, baseball, and track events; and the girls enjoy these sports, too, as spectators. Many boys and girls are interested in judo.

interests and questions of today's teen-agers

If any list of teen-age interests is looked at, it is probable that the items will fall into some five categories: (1) personal problems, (2) further education versus work after high school, (3) preparation for marriage and family life, (4) religion and a philosophy of life, (5) citizenship at the teen age and beyond.

The questions listed below are selected from the most persistent ones raised by youth groups in adult sponsored youth organizations and may serve as a reliable guide for the adviser in assembling resource materials that can be used by the members and himself in planning program. It will be seen that the same kinds of questions arise in more than one category and that all questions are interrelated. This fact gives credence to the contention that *the central longing, conscious or subconscious, of every teen-ager is to understand himself and to find the direction his life should take.*

I. PERSONAL PROBLEMS

In this category the following discussion topics are typical: how to improve my personality; good grooming; how to make and keep friends among both boys and girls; dating and going steady; how to get along with my family, including younger and older brothers and sisters; how to get my parents to understand that I can take some adult responsibility; how to manage

my money; what to expect from military service; what I can do about delinquency; how to know when I should or should not go with the crowd.

II. FURTHER EDUCATION VERSUS WORK AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Here are the kinds of questions arising on this subject: how do I get a part-time job; why stay in high school; how can I know what kind of work I'm fitted for; what are the vocational choices and what preparation is needed; why go to college, how much does it cost, is part-time work available there; how does one choose a college; what about schools that specialize in art, drama, dance, costume designing, and the like, versus a junior or four-year general college; should I get military service behind me before going to college or even before finishing high school?

III. PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

This is an area where the adult must be willing to look the facts of life straight in the eye. A genuine shockproof attitude is essential; otherwise some of the questions, important to adolescents and listed here, will never come out, and the opportunity to give guidance will be lost. Teen-agers ask: how do I know when I'm in love; why postpone sex experience until marriage when marriage may never come; what place does sex have in my life now and later? Teen-agers today are well-informed, usually, about the physical aspects but they want to know what this part of life can and should mean. They also ask: what's wrong with going steady? As of 1959 they have coined a new phrase—going *steadily*. This is less restrictive than going steady but both ideas are much on the

minds of both boys and girls. They want to know: how old should one be to marry, what should husbands and wives expect of each other, and what responsibility should parents assume for their children? Girls are interested in learning how to decorate a home tastefully and how to make a family budget. The question of possible marriage between members of different religious faiths is not uncommon. Both boys and girls wonder about the effect on family life when the woman pursues a career in addition to homemaking and children.

IV. RELIGION AND A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Boys and girls want to know how God and religion can be real for them. They ask: what is prayer, can it help, how do you pray and what for? They want to know about religions other than their own. They ask: what happens when we die, is there life after death? Many adults might be surprised to know how many teen-agers are afraid of death. These are other questions: how can I know right from wrong; how can I do what I know is right when others in the crowd do what I think is wrong; how can I know what to believe; can a person be scientific and religious at the same time; what does communism have against religion? Many are interested in the Bible but want to know what they can and cannot believe about it. They are concerned because adults often say one thing but act as though they didn't believe what they say. "Why?" asks the boy or girl. They are concerned about religious and racial prejudice and want to know why it exists, how a person knows when he is prejudiced, and what he can do to prevent it or correct it. This is an area of vital concern to

youth and one in which an adult must be at least prepared to say what he believes and why. Teen-agers often ask about this and want a straightforward answer.

V. CITIZENSHIP AT THE TEEN AGE AND BEYOND

Both boys and girls are concerned about military service. They accept it as a reality of citizenship responsibility but they have more questions about it than there is room to list. Their interest in Category III is indirectly related to these questions. Most teen-agers want to be good citizens of their school and community. Questions about what they can do to *prove* they are good citizens are more frequent than questions about the theory. The intensified adult worry about delinquency has the teen-age group worried about its reputation. Its members want to know what they can do about it. They would like a hearing about the kinds of high school courses they want. They seek opportunity to discuss local, state, national, and international issues. Many young people complain that their school civics classes give no chance to discuss *vital issues* that are talked about in the news, on radio and television.

Many teen-agers are showing their citizenship interest by helping to get out the vote in various ways, and by participation in such programs as Youth and Government, of the YMCA, and Boys State, sponsored by the American Legion. Others are giving volunteer service in social agencies, hospitals, settlement houses, and children's playground programs. Massachusetts, for example, has developed a state-wide teen-age volunteer service program integrated with the high school social studies curriculum. Louis-

ville, Kentucky, has had such a program for close to twenty years. Professional people train the young people for the work they are to do. Their assignments carry real responsibility which they find joy in assuming. This type of teen-age activity is growing with more and more young people asking for similar opportunities. At the present time there are more young people wanting to do significant community volunteer work than there are adults willing to give them a chance to show what they can do.

The New York University study, previously referred to, states: "Data in our study indicate that youth seem to be walled off from active participation in the significant aspects of community life . . . that adults expressed surprise in relation to all groups when they learned that youth were concerned with finding projects for community betterment." Further along in this report this statement is made: "There is a basic adult mistrust or unwillingness to give genuine responsibilities to young people." For example, one high school teacher said about a group seeking to help, "You must understand that these children are not ready for any responsibility."⁵

Participation in community affairs is an area of great potential significance for the adviser to a teen-age group. It would be wise to be particularly sensitive to any signs of interest on the part of any members of the group. Indications are that once interest starts and opportunity to translate it into action comes, the interest spreads to other teen-agers and

⁵ "Youth as Citizens," Human Relations Monograph 7, p. 75. *Op. cit.*

to other adults who see for themselves how capable the young people are.⁶

An adviser is at an advantage not only if he is aware of the things we have been talking about in this chapter but also if he has a reasonably clear picture of what is required of him as an adult related to a youth group. Therefore we shall look now at what young people, themselves, say they expect of their adviser and then try to see what we as adult leaders think they mean, in order to be of most effective help to the group which looks to us for guidance.

⁶ See *Partners with Youth*, Dorothy M. Roberts (New York: Association Press, 1956). This is a cross-country report on the subject.

2

what youth hopes for in an adult leader

*Be an opener of doors for such as come after thee
and do not try to make the universe a blind alley.*

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

In this chapter the qualifications that from the adolescent point of view make a good group leader are approached from two slants: (1) two original teen-age lists, in their own words—one drawn off from questionnaires in 1930, the other in 1954; and (2) an adult interpretation of what these youth were saying in their replies about what, to their way of thinking, made a satisfactory adult leader.

what two teen-age generations asked of an adult leader

In 1930 about 200 teen-age members of a New York Sunday School Department answered this query on a questionnaire: "What do you think an adult leader should be like?" Here is what they said:

THE 1930 LIST OF REQUIREMENTS

1. Age does not matter as long as there is understanding.
2. He must look interested and be alert.
3. He must know more than we do and have more experience.

4. He must not force his ideas on us but be willing to say what they are if we ask him.
5. He must be willing to listen to our ideas.
6. He must have ideas and suggestions but not try to force us to accept them or to work them out the way he thinks we should.
7. He must be willing to talk to us as though we had some sense and minds of our own.
8. He must be friendly.
9. He must trust us.
10. He must like us.

In 1954 the president of the Wisconsin Youth Committee reported the consensus of opinion of an equal number of youth, with a variety of religious, racial, economic, and social backgrounds, on a similar question: "What adviser traits are preferred by youth?"

With twenty-four years' lapse between the answers and with consideration of the geographical and background differences between the groups, it is significant that their ideas should correspond so closely to those of the earlier group. It is interesting to note, too, that the list which follows is a good illustration of present-day youth's adoption of adult terminology, a fact referred to in Chapter 1.

THE 1954 LIST OF REQUIREMENTS

1. Serious, sincere interest in seeing youth mature through experience.
2. Adviser must advise, not dictate. Work in such a way that youth draw their own conclusions through circumstances.

3. Adviser presents ideas frankly in a meeting. If ideas are voted down, no pouting, please.
4. Adviser works with youth doing dirty work.
5. Adviser puts self in shoes of youth occasionally, even to acting like them. Participate (when in good taste).
6. Adviser must be alert for group initiative. Learn to recognize and use it.
7. Adviser should have pride to spare—to give to others. Adviser is like one who pulls the curtain for a stage play. Show it when organized and under way.
8. Good moral background—youth should be able to be proud to introduce him to others.
9. Adviser to keep role—be familiar with group and procedure. Do not participate at level of youth, but as adviser. No motions as an equal member.
10. Adviser needs to state point of view. Passive method out! Be frank!
11. Politics have no place in a youth organization. Purpose is to give experience so that when we are adults we can formulate a political point of view.
12. Must not be jealous. Have respect for others in community. Do not go around those who disagree. Talk tactfully. Don't dodge adults. One of the experiences of maturing is to discuss with adults pro and con.
13. Adviser must be willing to put in hours of work.
14. Having a driver's license helps fill the role of adviser.
15. Be dependable, responsible, and one we can be proud of! Advisers have qualities in one situation and not in another. Can be developed as well as youth.¹

¹ This 1954 list is entitled "Adviser Traits Preferred by Youth" and is obtainable free by writing to the Wisconsin Youth Committee, 311 State Street, Madison, Wis. The pamphlet also contains an excellent "Adviser's Reading List," compiled in co-operation with the Wisconsin Free Library Commission.

an adult interpretation of youth requirements

We have seen what young people themselves say they require of an adult leader or adviser. Let's now take a look in more detail, to see what they mean in terms of adult values, attitudes, and activities in relation to working effectively with a teen-age group.

In a general way, the average adult who volunteers to work with a group already has some of these requirements or he would not wish to volunteer. First of all, he likes teen-agers and enjoys being with them. His interest in youth is sincere. He believes he can be of some help to them and is willing to learn how gradually to improve his work. He knows that youth can sometimes be noisy as they try to rid themselves of excess energy, but he is not annoyed by the confusion which seems unnecessary to many adults. He has ideas and a general philosophy of life which he feels is worth sharing. He has a reasonable amount of leisure which he prefers to spend in trying to be of help to younger people. He has worked out for himself a code of ethics and standards of behavior appropriate to a reasonably mature adult. He has an understanding of the duties and responsibilities which members of a democratic society freely assume. He has a special sense of responsibility to teen-agers. Finally, he has some faith in youth's potentialities and does not think, for one minute, that the age group, as a whole, is heading for delinquency or is any less "good" or less capable than he himself and others were at the same age.

"Be frank . . . No dictating . . . No pouting, please!" Teen-agers are quick to recognize an adult who knows where he is going and why. They are also

quick to recognize an adult who has a zest for living because he has some inner spiritual security which makes him unafraid of life. Young people instinctively respect such an adult. If the adult is friendly and respects them in turn, they will listen to him. At the same time they will feel free to argue the validity of his point of view on many things. This kind of possible relationship is at the root of youth's rejection of dictatorship and of the expectation that the adult will express his views frankly; that he will be willing to discuss anything, on equal terms; and that his adult dignity will not be injured if his views are not accepted. To meet youth, on these terms, is not always easy for an adult, especially if he has been brought up on the general philosophy of "being seen but not heard." There are many adults left who have this attitude. Of these, many are parents, teachers, religious and youth group leaders. Fortunate is the youth group which has an adviser who holds firmly to his convictions and whose actions coincide with those convictions but who does not require that everyone should agree with him.

Adult *integrity* is a *must* for an adviser to a youth group, but *tolerance* of the views of others, including youth's views, is equally important.

Teen-agers have a right to expect that an adult will have quite definite views on every subject of human interest and also have the courage to stand up for what he thinks and believes. At the same time they have a right to expect that the adult will not violate youth's right to arrive at his own views as far as he is able. Members of a youth group also have the right to expect that when they get bogged down in their thinking or program planning their adviser

will be willing and able to open a new door which they have not seen.

Will they be proud of you? Young people have a right to expect that an adult who works with them should have a good moral background. They have not yet succumbed to judging a person's worth by his material possessions or social position. They look first at the kind of person the adult is. Nevertheless, both boys and girls appreciate having their adviser look as neat and as attractive as possible. Young people's desire to be proud of the group adviser is tantamount to being able to say to their other friends, "Look, I've found an adult worth knowing and I think you'd like to know him too."

It is a universal human need to have someone to look up to as an example. All living religions provide one or more such examples. The younger a person is, the more concrete, tangible, and understandable such an example must be. Youth is too sensible to expect an adult to be perfect. Evidence of sincere effort to be an honest, friendly, morally and socially responsible adult is what counts. The eyes of youth see straight through insincerity—often quite quickly, but always eventually.

Participate and don't participate with youth. These two requirements seem to be irreconcilable, but they are not. The youth desire for adult participation relates to the fun side of their activities, and the opposite relates to their serious side as they try to formulate ideas and plan activities at a club meeting.

Participate. An adviser does not have to rock and roll in order to participate actively in the group's fun activities. He can actively enjoy the fun they are

having and refrain from being a "wet blanket." Each adviser should participate in whatever type of youth fun is natural to him and in keeping with his personality, interests, and abilities. If it is not the adult's nature to feel at ease in acting and talking like a teen-ager, even when it is "in good taste," then for him to try to so act and talk would be a gesture of insincerity and a violation of adult integrity. Youth is quick to see through this too.

If the adviser honestly feels that a certain form of fun is undesirable, he is almost obligated to discuss it with his group at the first appropriate opportunity. Good reasons are needed. The matter should then be dropped unless the group wishes to pursue the subject further. If so, then the adviser, having had his say, listens to the group's point of view, with readiness to be frank and honest if questions arise.

Don't participate at the level of youth. During club meetings, youth *does* expect the adviser to participate at any point where an idea would be helpful or to clarify some issue being discussed. The principle of adult ability to size up the situation and to know when and when not to participate is involved here.

Every adult leader has to make certain decisions in relation to group activity or to problems or attitudes of the individual boy or girl. Decisions are involved in such things as the leader's own attitude in unusual situations; what to do when a boy or girl is a problem to the other club members; situations calling for discipline; what to do when the leader's judgment conflicts with his supervisor's; how far to permit a group to experiment; what to do when a club contemplates action that may have serious consequences for the sponsoring agency.

Adult judgment is a reliable guide provided that the principle of allowing a group the maximum freedom in decision making is strictly adhered to. Mistakes in judgment do occur. If the adviser is sensitive to the moods of the group he can tell by facial expressions, a sudden silence, or by any one of a dozen signs that he has overstepped. It increases the group's confidence in him if he lets it know simply and with a light touch that he realizes he has done so.

The point that youth wants to make here is this: that unless some contemplated action is contrary to the policy of the adult agency sponsoring the group, decisions should be left in their hands, but with the expectation that the adviser will point out facts they have not considered or will give them additional information needed for a satisfactory outcome of their plans.

Adult-Adult Relationships. This idea concerns the relationship of the adviser to other adults in the organization or community. Youth expects that an adult will not be jealous if another accomplishes something he himself has not been able to do. They also expect that adults will be tolerant of other adult points of view. It is interesting that this group, in drawing up its list of "Adviser Traits Preferred by Youth," should have given thought to adult relationships. It almost seems as though the members were aware of the frequent weaknesses in their own relationships to each other and were looking for an example of good relationships on the adult level.

Politics has no place in a youth organization. Youth's comment on this aspect of desirable adviser traits may have a direct relationship to the exposure

of youth to unlimited information, a fact noted in the first chapter. Communism is often discussed in youth groups. They are aware that one way infiltration is achieved is through a youth group and they want to run no risks of its happening to them. This does not mean they want no discussion of politics or of local, state, national, and international issues. Many groups desire discussion of issues. What they mean is that they are jealous of their freedom to make up their own minds and do not expect or want their adviser to influence them directly or indirectly toward one political point of view or another. In this area as in others they do, however, expect a frank adult statement of views when asked for.

Recognize and use youth initiative. Every youth group has its own actual and potential leadership within it. Each group is different from every other group, just as different as are the individuals composing any single group in spite of similarities.

Sometimes a group seems to show no leadership at all. In such a group an adviser must take more than the normal degree of initiative until such time as some leadership potential begins to show. This is perhaps the hardest kind of group to deal with because the adult temptation is strong to *assume* that there are no leaders when the ability to use initiative is not obvious. In this kind of group the adviser needs to discipline himself constantly in order to refrain from doing anything which some member of the group ought to be trying to do. There is every assurance in the world that given a little extra time, the group's own inherent leadership will begin to exert itself.

Time was when the officers of a youth group were

looked upon as *the* leaders and the rest of the group as followers. Studies of leadership indicate now that the officers may or may not be true leaders. Sometimes the members of a group do not know each other well and in their haste to get organized they elect the most articulate members as their officers. It is never good practice for an adviser to interfere with this process even if he sees that their choice will prove unwise. Groups can learn from a mistake of this kind. Sometimes such a mistake may not be serious enough to affect the functioning of the group very much, especially if the adviser works with the officers to help them understand and carry out their duties.

Sometimes poor youth leadership does interfere so that attendance drops off and interest lags because the group feels it is accomplishing nothing even though the adviser has tried to help and encourage the new officers. When this *begins* to happen it is appropriate for the adviser to suggest that something is wrong and that the group have a frank discussion to try to find out what the trouble is. It is also appropriate for the adviser to offer to preside at this meeting so that all officers can take part in the discussion. Groups have been known to change officers in mid-stream. Even if they do not decide to do so, a lagging group profits by the experience of analyzing the situation. During the process they may discover something else that needs to be done to improve the functioning of the group. The adviser sometimes sees leadership potential in some members that he has not seen before.

Studies of leadership also show that even when a group's officers are functioning well, there is much

actual and potential leadership among the members which can and should be developed. Sometimes there is a group or clique which exercises real leadership and has value for the group. This is a situation to be watched to make sure that other members are not denied the opportunity to contribute what they can to discussion and program planning. An adviser can work with such a clique to help its individuals to recognize their value to the group but at the same time to use their leadership abilities to draw others into more active participation.

Sometimes one member seeks out the adviser to discuss ideas he may have and to get advice about how to present these ideas to the group. This same person may sometimes be observed seeking the same kind of advice from other members. If he seems to profit by the advice, this indicates to the adviser that here is potential leadership which needs nourishing. If he does not seem to profit, it probably indicates that he is looking for security by friendship with the adult. An adviser must take care in helping individuals that the group is never left in doubt that there is on his part *equal interest in every member* of the group.

Within the group as a whole individuals will show leadership ability in one situation and not in another. Obviously not all people can be a leader in every type of situation and some can never be leaders in any setting. If the adviser does all in his power to establish the principle that every member of the group has something to contribute whether as a leader or as a follower, the chance of failure to recognize youth initiative and to encourage it will be greatly lessened. The more individuals who can be helped to use

what leadership ability each has, the better the group can work together as a co-operative team.

SUMMARY

The fascination of working with youth groups is that each group has its own characteristics. For this reason no rules relating to either adult or youth leadership can be laid down which are applicable to every situation or to every group to which they might theoretically apply. The best that can be done is to indicate, as we have tried to do, some sound principles the application of which must rest with the individual adviser as he works with his individual group.

However, the major adviser role is definite. It is (1) to help each member to recognize and develop his own potentialities and to find his unique place in the group; (2) to help all individuals in the group work together as a co-operative team to accomplish whatever purposes or goals the group may have; (3) to help the group recognize and pursue general and specific goals which are of interest to the members but which are also constructive in relation to their age group and to the community. The adult adviser's role is also that of a leader in the sense that during his own passage from youth to adulthood he has opened many doors for himself and has had many opened for him so that he knows the general direction to take.

The essence of adult leadership is, as Emerson says, "to be an opener of doors," but also to make sure that each door stays open until youth has happily and safely passed through and is ready to look for another.

3

the process of program building

Program building is a continuing process during which there should occur gradual and observable growth in individual ability to get along with others and to solve personal problems in ways that are spiritually, morally, and ethically satisfying to the person and acceptable to the community; growth in the group's ability to distinguish between programs having constructive value for all and those which do not, and to choose accordingly; growth in the group's ability to work as a cooperative team to reach whatever general and specific goals the members set for themselves from time to time.

how working with the group's organization helps

The most valuable tool the adviser has is the group's organization. Perfection of this organization should not be an end in itself, but the stronger it is the better tool it is. For the group, its organization should provide direct and satisfying experience in arriving at decisions by means of the orderly democratic process which constitutes the backbone of our free society. For the adviser, it provides the framework within which the opportunity exists to help the group find satisfaction and meaning in this orderly process both in the present and for the future.

As an adviser begins his work he faces one of several situations in relation to the group's organization. He may find that the group has a *wide range of leadership potential*. The structure of the organization may provide for a cabinet or executive committee, for standing committees, and for the appointment of special ones as they are needed. Such a group needs the minimum of help because of the kind of organization it has. The adviser's job is to observe and to become familiar with the group's procedures in order to abide by them and offer his help within the already established framework.

The adviser may find that the group has a *weak organizational structure*, in which case one of the first jobs would be to find out where and why it is weak. His next step would be to help the group to understand and correct the weaknesses.

The third type of situation is one in which the group is new with *no organization of its own*. Most new groups are impatient to elect officers and write a constitution. Whether this should be encouraged or discouraged depends on how well the members know each other and whether or not they have any known specific reason for wanting to have a group. Unless the members are quite well acquainted, it is better to forestall both elections and the constitution for at least two meetings. But postponement should not be forced lest the new group gain the feeling that the adviser is there to dictate rather than to help.

In any event the adviser would need to take charge of the first meeting. Elections could be forestalled by suggesting introductions and a discussion of possible interests of the group in order to

clarify some of the reasons members might have for the formation of the group. If the new group is one associated with a nationally oriented youth organization, a general purpose is usually stated and accepted by the group when it organizes. Some time could be spent in discussing this general purpose in relation to specific ideas the members might have. Plans would need to be made for a second meeting. A vote would be taken to decide whether to elect a temporary chairman for this second meeting or whether the group wanted the adviser to serve until permanent officers were elected. Some new groups find it helpful to elect a different chairman for each of several meetings before elections are held. The adviser will have to use his judgment as to how to proceed.

The first meeting is a crucial one. *How* the adviser says things is far more important than *what* he says. He should not be afraid of making a mistake but depend upon his friendly feeling for the members to help him to transmit to them his desire to be as helpful as possible. Try as he will, the chances are that it may be some weeks before he knows whether or not his friendly attitudes have come through to the group. It is always wise to remember that most teenagers tend to feel or at least to suspect that adults want to "boss them." Naturalness and sincerity are the adult's best insurance that a good working relationship between himself and the group will develop in time.

Regardless of the condition in which the adviser finds the group organization it is a tool to be developed and used. It is through regular meetings with the officers and chairmen of committees and with the committees themselves that the adviser can do his

best work. In these smaller groups the adviser and members get to know each other well. It is where mutual confidence can be established and developed. It is also where the idea can be established that each club member has something to contribute to the welfare of the group, and where the principle of tolerance and co-operation can be nurtured. This work behind the scenes is time consuming and not spectacular but pays off in the long run. As the group learns to work together, ideas begin to sprout more frequently, interest in all the group's activities increases, and the whole group is happier and feels that something interesting is always happening. All this takes time to develop. The weaker the organization at the beginning the longer it takes for the co-operative spirit and habit of teamwork to become established. Much patience is required and much adult restraint. It is much easier for the adviser to direct activities than to help the group to become capable of directing them. It is sometimes essential for the adviser to direct, but to do so habitually prevents growth. Happy should be the adviser when his work load can safely be reduced. Guidance will be asked for from time to time and suggestions will be welcome, but the less the adviser feels he *must* do, the more assurance he has that individuals and the group are growing up.

how the activities program develops

Program is *everything* a group does from participating in an inspirational worship service to a pizza pie party or developing the organization functionally. If both individual growth and group growth are to

result, there are three inviolable principles in relation to building an activities program:

1. *The over-all program must be well-balanced among spiritual, mental, physical, and social activities.* There must be *variety* within these divisions and enough *flexibility in the planning* to allow room for a follow-up of some sudden interest which may show up unexpectedly.

Variety is important because of the limited teenage interest span and because boredom is a teen-age plague. Signs of it need to be watched for since they indicate to the adviser that a change of pace is needed. Some of these signs are restlessness during meetings, a fall-off in attendance, and a general lack of enthusiasm. Restlessness during a meeting may indicate only that the presiding officer needs help. Sometimes an adviser needs to remind the group that its president deserves courtesy, but he must use his judgment about doing so.

The adviser needs to be somewhat of a detective to discover the true causes of lack of interest in order to guide the group toward improving its program, personal relationships, or organizational structure. A good power of observation during group meetings is an adviser's first asset. Ability to analyze objectively what is going on is a second. To be increasingly able to put two and two together in order to give help where it is most needed, and in the appropriate way and time, is the third important asset.

2. *A program must start at the level of the group's need and interest.* For example, it would be of little value to try to develop a program around the work of the United Nations if the majority of the group

were at the stage of worrying about how to make and keep a boyfriend or a girlfriend. A United Nations program has many values and might well capture the interest of the group at a later time, however.

It can almost be guaranteed that each teen-age interest outlined in Chapter 1 will show up at one time or another. The principle involved here is that *a person learns best when he is ready to learn*. Stated another way, a youth group finds satisfaction and value in learning when the interest or need to learn a particular thing is at its peak. It is a practical matter of timing. The better the adviser knows the individual members of his group the better-equipped he is to sense when one need or interest is coming to the forefront in his group. He is then better-equipped to help the group itself to recognize what the dominant interest is and to develop the activity around it at the exact point where it is keenest.

3. *The decision to develop any specific program idea must grow out of the interest of the group in the idea.* An idea can come from a club member or the adviser, from a news story, magazine article, or a radio or television program. Some incident in school or in the community may arouse teen-age interest or concern. An idea could result from a conversation or from overheard teen-age remarks. The sources of ideas are inexhaustible. The only limitations are these: the idea must have a relationship to the known teen-age interests and needs; it must have enough scope to provide substance for at least one program meeting; it must capture the interest of the majority; the timing in the use of the idea must coincide with the time at which the substance of the idea has significance for the group.

a program illustration

Let's take an idea, see where it came from, and imagine how a program might develop. The idea chosen deals with one aspect of the delinquency problem. It has been chosen because *teen-agers are disturbed about their age-group reputation*. It is a rare group in which the subject does not arise. The situation and the conversation about it are fictional but have a basis in reality. The action proposed by the group is factual although it represents a composite of what youth groups have done in a number of different communities rather than what a single group has done in any single community.

The situation. The local paper of a medium-sized community published a front-page story on the town's "Teen-Age Vandals." This was the third time in a week that adolescent trouble makers had hit the news. The bus company complained that teen-agers marked up the buses with crayons and cut the upholstery costing the company a lot of money. Various merchants complained about teen-age impudence and the prevalence of petty thieving. This time ten windows had been broken, and ink spilled on a classroom floor of the Eighth Street School. The article urged the police to put offenders in jail and the town to pass and enforce a curfew law.

The birth of the idea. Several club members came early for their club meeting and sat around talking. Gloria said, "Did you see tonight's paper? Gee, teen-agers are getting an awful reputation!" . . . "Ya, my mother won't let me go to the movies at night, 'fraid I'll get into trouble." Jean said, "The trouble is, there's nothing to do in this town. We can't even go

bowling; Sam won't let teen-agers in any more." Joe joined in, "You can say that again . . . this town's dead . . . that's the trouble. We're okay—at least we have our club—but a lot of kids have nothing to do except homework, and who wants to—oh, hi, Miss Carey." And then there was dead silence.

Miss Carey took in the situation. After greeting the members she said, "You all seem steamed up about something. What's the matter?" Gloria spoke up, "I'll say we're steamed up. Did you see tonight's paper? All the teen-agers are in bad again. Gee, you can't even walk down the street with a bunch of kids and laugh out loud without some adult scowling at you." . . . "Ya, that's right, they think we're all delinquent." After a moment Miss Carey said, "Do you think most of the teen-agers feel this way?" When they expressed certainty that they did she suggested that perhaps they'd better change their discussion topic for tonight and talk about this problem. "Good idea," they all said at once. "Let's do that, there ought to be something we can do about it."

First steps. As the others were coming in Miss Carey asked Gloria and the others if they would like her to tell the club president what they had been talking about and ask him if he was willing to change the meeting plans. This was done. The meeting ran overtime.

The group quickly reached a number of agreements. The town was dead, and most of the kids had no place to go and nothing to do except study; a lot of kids were bored and would do anything for excitement; their teen-age reputation was at stake, and most parents were afraid their own kids would

get into trouble. Finally the members decided that the curfew wouldn't stop the trouble and would only punish the decent kids. The rest of the meeting was given over to trying to decide what they and the other "decent" kids could do about the situation.

One said, "Maybe our school Student Council could do something. Joe, you're a council member, you could bring the subject up, next meeting." Another said, "Maybe we could call a meeting of all the teen-agers and adults. If we had a panel of kids they could tell the adults the town is dead and a lot of them have nothing to do. . . . Others chimed in, "That's a good idea, what we need is some kind of recreation center where we could dance and have fun. . . . Ya, and have bowling too, since Sam won't let us in any more. . . . Maybe we could start a campaign for teen-age decency. . . . Sure, that's something the Council could do at school." . . . "The thing that worries me," said another, "is, my mother doesn't trust me to go out with my friends. When I come home she looks like she wants to ask me if I got in trouble. Gee, I'm not going to get in trouble, what's worrying her?" . . . Ya, my mom's the same way. I can't even go to a movie at night or if I do I have to come right home. . . . Can't even stop for a coke or a pizza." Most nodded agreement.

The decision. There seemed to be no end of the discussion in sight when Miss Carey looked at her watch, and so she said, "We certainly have enough constructive ideas to go ahead on. What about appointing a committee to work on these ideas and come up with a plan or two for the next meeting? I noticed that in all the excitement our secretary was

having trouble getting all the ideas down, so I jotted them down too."

Jean said, "That's a good idea, it's late. I move a committee be appointed and that Miss Carey meet with them." The motion was passed. Two boys and two girls were appointed, and Miss Carey agreed to meet with them early the next evening.

The outcome. The committee met several times and came up with the following plans for the club's consideration:

Plan I. That the club should draw up a resolution to be presented to the Student Council by Joe requesting that the council consider what it could do to develop a teen-age decency campaign in the school.

Plan II. That the club call a meeting of parents and teen-agers. The subject to be: "Why Don't Parents Trust Us?" presented by a panel of parents, with discussion from the floor.

Plan III. That the club sponsor a community meeting of parents and teen-agers to discuss the need for a recreation center. The committee had a divided opinion as to whether the club or the school council should sponsor the meeting and so reported.

The committee had two further suggestions: (1) That one or two members volunteer to talk with the newspaper editor to try to get him to run a story about their club telling of their volunteer work at the children's hospital and how they had helped to raise money for the community chest. Also to solicit his help in getting the bowling alley open to them again. (2) That if Plan III was chosen they ought to make a survey to find out how teen-agers spend their time

so as to have facts to present when they asked for a recreation center. They reported that Miss Carey had a friend who would probably help them make the right kind of questionnaire. Which plan the group adopted must be left to the imagination.

Some Pointers from the Illustration. The illustration points up a number of things: the advantages of an adviser's early arrival for a meeting; the principle of flexibility in program planning which made a shift of program possible to take advantage of an unexpected spontaneous teen-age interest; the advantage the adviser has when he is observing and sensitive to teen-age moods, when he is able to evaluate the importance of an immediate interest and to see quickly whether or not something can and should be done about it. It also shows that the kind of relationship had been established between the adviser and the president and between the adviser and the group which made her suggestions acceptable to the group in this instance. It also illustrates the advantage of having the organizational machinery in good enough order so that a desire for group action can be satisfied in an orderly fashion without impulsive haste. The whole process illustrates how a group can feel satisfied that it is "getting somewhere" in dealing with an idea.

If a speaker had been scheduled the change in meeting plans would not have been possible. In this case the adviser could have suggested that some member bring the subject up at the beginning of the meeting and a committee be appointed to give the subject thought and to report at the next meeting. Such a procedure would indicate to the group that

the adviser recognized the importance of the subject to the members and was ready to consider how their interest could be satisfied when the scheduled program could not be changed. Impatience "to get going" is another teen-age characteristic and to learn to wait, when necessary, is not always easy. The adviser's suggestion would help the members to know she understood how they felt about having to wait.

some general principles of program planning

The subject matter for a meeting or the activity at any time must be in line with what the group itself recognizes to be of interest. Suggestions can come from the adviser or from other sources, but the ultimate choice for any specific program must rest with the group.

Professional workers with teen-age groups have divided opinions about how far in advance programs should be planned. Some feel that a group should know, in a general way, what it is going to do for one school semester of club meetings. These argue that if a group, meeting once a week, plans one business meeting, two serious program meetings and one social a month, and for several months in advance, the over-all program will stand a better chance of achieving both balance and variety. They also argue that the necessary flexibility to allow for a spontaneous program, like that in our illustration, exists because either the business or the social meeting could be eliminated if there was sufficient reason for doing so.

Others argue that no more than four meetings, and still others that no more than two meetings, should be planned in advance. These people main-

tain that teen-agers are better served by having the maximum degree of flexibility in program planning.

An adviser working with a group which is a unit of a large youth-serving organization needs to abide by the program planning policy of the professional supervisor in charge of the total youth program. It is advantageous for the adviser to know what this policy is, so as to be able to help his group function within it.

If an adviser does not need to work within an accepted program planning policy he will need to experiment to find out which method best suits his group. Factors which need consideration are these: the existing structure of the group organization—for example, whether or not the group has, or can create, a program planning committee with which the adviser can work; how well a group has defined its own interests or how ready it is to do so; what is the present interest the group has in being together—for example, if a group is, for the present, a hobby group of some kind, program planning, as we have talked about it, would not apply until such time as the members' interests enlarged and they wished to develop other kinds of programs.

The author's own view is that the less rigidity there is in the framework of program planning the more chance there is for the members of a youth group to find their program direction, on their own, provided that their adviser is an interested, responsible, and resourceful person.

4

two concrete aids to program building

There are two program-building helps that have exceptional value for all advisers but special value for a new one. These are a *Club File* and a *Check List* to determine program interests.

how to set up a club file

A club file has three divisions, one for each of the following: (1) program ideas, (2) information about individual members, and (3) evaluation records for each activity. A dozen office-type filing folders and a few oversize manila mailing envelopes can serve as containers. Here are suggestions for such a file.

The File of Program Materials. To set up this file one oversize manila envelope is needed. This should be marked: Service Projects; Social Activities; Money-Raising Ideas; and Physical Activities. Filing folders should be prepared with corresponding labels and placed in the envelope. A second envelope would hold folders marked as follows: Personal Problems; Work and Further Education; Preparation for Marriage and Family Life; Religion and a Philosophy of Life; Community and the World. The envelope should be indexed. As it becomes overcrowded some

folders can be transferred to a second envelope which is also indexed.

Much of the material for this file is collected as the adviser goes about his own affairs. He unconsciously develops the habit of having the group interests in the back of his mind. This habit makes him spot ideas in all categories in the normal course of reading magazines, newspapers, books, and while listening to the radio or viewing television. He develops a listening ear which helps him to pick up ideas from overheard remarks of teen-agers whenever he happens to be near them. He sees a poem or bit of inspirational prose which he recognizes as suitable for a group's devotional periods. Libraries often list helpful teen-age books, pamphlets, and filmstrips. Each idea, from whatever source, should be jotted down when found and filed in the appropriate folder before it is forgotten.

Some kinds of material have to be looked for. For example, groups always need speakers from time to time. Community sources for speakers are many. Service Clubs like Rotary and Kiwanis, as well as similar women's groups, have people qualified to talk to groups about job possibilities and the training needed. Members of these groups often have hobbies of interest to teen-agers. Churches and religious groups are a source of speakers in this category. College and Women's Clubs often have people willing to talk about college. Some members are qualified to talk on vocations or psychology as related to youth problems. The high school counseling service is another source. Faculty members of any near-by college are often interested in speaking to youth groups or willing to serve as resource persons at a

youth workshop or conference. News stories of speakers other youth groups have had and liked could be followed up, and the speaker located. The chairman of a Council of Social Agencies could recommend speakers to talk on the social needs of the community or suggest service projects a group could undertake. A personnel manager of a store often is willing to talk on merchandising as a career or to help arrange for a fashion show. Political organizations have people able to discuss issues with a group or suggest ways in which teen-agers could help in a political campaign.

Speakers are tricky to choose and care needs to be taken in recommending one to a group, but this is something an adviser cannot avoid. Young people have trouble locating good speakers or if they know a good one have trouble signing him up without adult backing and help. The qualities teen-agers look for in a speaker are plain, straight language with no "talking down" to them, willingness to answer all questions frankly with no hedging, and willingness to say "I don't know" if the question requires that answer. Whatever an adviser can do to build up a reliable list of speakers, in advance, will be appreciated by the group and save him a lot of hectic scrambling when a group decides it wants a speaker. When one is located in any category it is helpful to list his name, address, telephone number, specialty subject, and time he is most likely to be available, on the inside cover of the appropriate folder. Information then is always available when needed.

The Membership File. It is wise for an adviser to keep his personal record of attendance. It is easy

to assume that attendance is steady, but the record tells the truth. A drop-off in attendance of members of a voluntary group is a red flag and needs prompt investigation. Such a record also shows the adviser which members attend irregularly thus alerting him to the need of finding out why. In addition to the attendance sheet there ought to be a confidential file card on each member, recording his full name, nickname, parents' names, address, and telephone number. Observations about each group member should be entered regularly, perhaps on the back of the card. These might include an estimate of the kind of person he seems to be, modifying it as needed; his relationship to other members and to the group as a whole; his reaction to you, as an adult, with notations of changes as they occur; information about his home, school, and religious interests as they are casually picked up without undue questioning. Members often make significant comments which, if recorded, may be of help to the adviser if personal help should be needed at some later time.

Such a personal file on each member, kept with understanding and care, helps the adviser to see each one as a unique individual rather than just one of a group. The better an adviser knows individuals the better able he is to give personal help when needed and also to help the group, as a whole, to develop an effective, satisfying, working unity.

The Activities File. The purpose of this file is to have on hand an evaluation of each activity at the time it occurs. The record needs to be made as soon after the activity as possible and should include names of those attending. The kinds of observa-

tions which are helpful include the following: an estimate of the success of the program method used, extent of participation, and the general atmosphere in relation to interest, enthusiasm, or boredom. Any unusual incident, such as a verbal flare-up between members, should be noted and also recorded in the individual member's file. Unusual incidents of any kind may have more eventual significance than appears when they occur. If it is a business meeting, the president, secretary, treasurer, and chairmen of committees making a report should be observed, and any help they might need in doing a better job should be noted. All these kinds of details kept only in the head are apt to be forgotten. A written record does not need to be lengthy but it should be accurate and as objective as possible. The combination of information about individuals and an evaluation of each activity as it occurs gives the adviser a more complete picture of the group's progress or lack of it than he could have otherwise.

Those advisers who take the initial time to set up some such complete Club File and keep the records up to date find it saves time and energy in the long run. Most important, they find it is one of the best helps an adviser can provide, *for himself*, in doing the kind of job with his group that he really wants to do.

how to enrich program by a check list

A check list or interest finder is a series of statements each one of which expresses a known need that is characteristic of most teen-agers. Using a check list helps the adviser and the group to pinpoint the relative group interests. Program meetings can then

be planned accordingly. Here is one made in 1957 and currently in use by many youth groups composed of either boys or girls. Each member needs a copy of the list.

AN INTEREST FINDER¹

If the statement is of no interest to you, mark X in Box 1. If the statement is of some but not great interest to you, mark X in Box 2. If the statement is of great interest to you, mark X in Box 3. Do NOT sign your name. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers; express your own opinion.

	No Int. 1	Some Int. 2	Great Int. 3
1. Learning how to assume leadership in the school or community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. How to be attractive to the opposite sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Learning to express myself in public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Getting my parents to understand that I can assume adult responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Knowing what to expect from college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Knowing how to achieve and maintain good health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. How to have a good time in a crowd	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹ *Self-Evaluation Program Planning Kit*, National Board of Young Men's Christian Associations. New York: Association Press, 1957, p. 19.

	No Int. 1	Some Int. 2	Great Int. 3
8. How to get along with other members of my family including younger and older brothers and sisters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Knowing more about public issues and current affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Deciding what place religion should have in my life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Making the community realize that teen-agers are responsible citizens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. How to handle my money wisely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Choosing the right vocation or career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Knowing what to do (or not to do) about the use of alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Giving thought to what I will be in 10 or 15 years from now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Consideration of what makes a happy marriage and a happy home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Developing a philosophy of life that makes sense to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. How to find satisfactory part-time work while in school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Knowing what to expect of military service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Knowing when "to follow or not to follow the crowd"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*How to Score the Results.*² Make a tally sheet numbered 1 to 20 like the sample below. (1) Multiply the number of tallies in Column 2 by 2. Multiply the number of tallies in Column 3 by 3. (2) Add the scores of Column 2 (some interest) and Column 3 (great interest). The total score represents the majority opinion of the club on each of the 20 statements.

No Interest		Some Interest		Great Interest		Score Total
Statement Number	Tally Count	Score	Tally Count	Score		
1	////////// 11 x 2 =	22	////////// 8 x 3 =	24		46

The program committee could tally the scores with your help. The chairman should report the results at the next meeting. The two or three subjects rating the highest score could be listed on a blackboard. The club would then need to decide which of these to tackle first, how many meetings should be devoted to it, and what form the meeting should take. Variety in program presentation is as important as variety in the total club program. Some subjects can best be handled through discussion, some need a speaker followed by discussion. For others, where information is needed, a panel discussion best fits the bill. Role playing or dramatization is effective. A joint meeting with other youth groups is another possibility. Breaking up into small groups (buzz groups), when issues need to be clarified before a general dis-

² *Self-Evaluation Program Planning Kit (op. cit.)*, p. 24.

cussion can be valuable, is still another way. Filmstrips offer another possibility. Suggestions from the adviser can be offered freely, but the decision about the program method must be left with the group.

the last word

An adult can find no greater satisfaction than in giving time and energy to a youth group if he genuinely likes teen-agers. It is fun but also a responsibility. It is a humbling experience to have a young person look up to you as an example and to have a group depend on you for guidance. At the same time it is a good feeling.

An adviser is, in a way, a substitute parent. He faces the same kind of problem which a parent faces. It is so good to feel the dependence of the young that the temptation is always present to keep it that way. Every wise and mature parent knows that he must let his children go, and so he resists the temptation to keep them dependent. He also rejoices at evidence that a child is learning to stand on his own feet. The parent then stands by, with love and respect for the child and with readiness to help when a call comes.

So it is with an adviser to a youth group who seeks to be friends with the members, *not because he needs them but because, having found a satisfying adulthood for himself*, he feels that he has something to offer youth as each seeks to find the road to a satisfying, useful adulthood of his own.

An adviser who looks upon himself as "an opener

of doors" rejoices when even one young person finds a new door and opens it for himself. This is the reward which comes from working with a teen-age group. Those adults who have experienced this kind of satisfaction know that it is priceless.

DATE DUE

OCT 20 '62	JUN 12 '63	
DEC 14 '62	JUN 20 '63	
JAN 7 '63	JUN 2 '70	
JAN 20 '63	JUN 2 '70	
DEC 2 '63	DEC 1 '70	
DEC 10 '63	DEC 18 '70	
JAN 10 '64	JAN 10 '71	
FEB 22 '64	JAN 1 '71	
MAR 10 '64	APR 16 '71	
MAR 1 '65	MAR 18 '71	
MAR 10 '65	JAN 10 '72	
MAR 9 '65	DEC 8 '72	
MAR 3 '66	JAN 6 '73	
NOV 8 '66	JAN 6 '73	
DEC 7 '66	JAN 6 '73	
OCT 6 '66	JAN 6 '73	
JAN 7 '68	JAN 6 '73	
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